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THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA

THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA is a national non-profit organization whose object is the improvement of the art of puppetry. The organization is governed by a national council elected by the membership.

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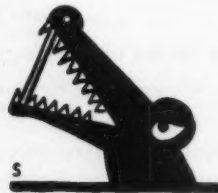
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Festival! Festival! Festival!
June 23-24-25-26

Institute! Institute! Institute!
June 27 through July 4

Dartmouth College
Hanover, N. H.

Shakespeare Into Puppets

Martin Stevens

(Courtesy of Players Magazine)

The title of this article indicates what should be the fundamental consideration of "how to." Note that this is not Shakespeare into Globe Theatre,, Shakespeare into Broadway, or Television or Movies or anything else, but into puppets. As in any art form, when a work of art is translated into another medium, it must take on the nature of that medium, not only boldly, but frankly, so that a marble statue translated into paper sculpture should look like paper sculpture, rather than like imitation marble.

That sacred name, Shakespeare, has more traditions around it than you can shake a stage-brace at, and that's just dandy for Shakespeare traditionalists. But if you're putting Shakespeare into puppets, you're living now, and so is your audience. In all probability both of you are more interested in a good puppet show entertainment than you are in the difference between Irving and Booth.

Assuming you know your medium (puppetry), adapt your material (Shakespeare) to it according to your own taste. A very good thing would be to pretend you don't know who wrote this play. You do know who's adapting it and who's going to perform it.

Why are you using this particular play? Do you like it? Okay. Does some of it confuse you? You can be sure it'll confuse your audience. You can't follow all those multiple plots? Throw 'em out. You like the one central story? Okay, keep it in. What's

that? The old words, the obsolete ones bother you? Then of course they won't mean a thing to your audience. Find out what they mean now, and use modern words instead. You'll be truer to the Bard, for I assure you he wanted his audience to understand everything he said.

Now when you have simplified it sufficiently as to script how about manipulation? Oh, still have too many characters to handle? Well, which can you throw out? Oh, don't worry, they'll never be missed. We did "Macbeth" without King Duncan, and no one ever complained. "Macbeth" can be done excitingly with a cast of eight, and "The Shrew" hilariously with a cast of five! If you have the spirit, the audience won't be finicky about the letter.

How about compressing your scenes the same way? Can several things logically be done in the same place? Put 'em there. Take another look at your (not Shakespeare's) play. What about that scene that can be left out altogether? Yes, I know, your scenic artist could "have a ball" doing that one, but your audience will know you can (or can't) paint scenery when it sees your first set. You needn't go on proving it all evening. For that matter, have you thought of not using any scenery?

Whatever playwright you use, it'll be your show the audience likes or doesn't like and personally I'd rather offend Bill than the cash customers. What it amounts to is Shakespeare into your puppets, or more properly Shakespeare through you.

Every Member Get A Member!

Commedia del Arts for Puppets?

Leonora D. Head

Ever since the world famous literary battle between those eighteenth century playwrights Carlo Gozzi and Carlo Goldoni, the bitter war between the written play and the unwritten one has raged. Even today, the spat continues on our stages, sound studios, T.V. stations and puppet stages. Many times we have been asked by both puppeteers and "back stage" directors, just why we did not save ourselves all this work of vocalizing by the use of tape, wire or records. The reason is simple to us, and it is the same reason why we do not use a written script. It is the same reason that a lot of puppeteers like to do their show "live" with merely formats to guide them.

The Commedia del 'Arte or Impromptu Comedy or Unwritten Comedy or just plain ad libbing (whatever you want to call it) has a stage charm and ever elusive, tantalizing perfection that creates a spice and freshness which has never been fully captured in script. The process of actual thinking and listening in, ad libbing naturally keeps a puppeteer on his toes; whereas, the constant repetition of a script which requires "pretended" thinking and listening is apt to result in sudden "blackouts" of memory by too much "going through the same motions." The ad lib alertness of a character keeps him in his role and able to develop his own "punch" lines with an enthusiasm and force. It is this frank, "unrehearsed" sparkle that persuaded us to become modern Commedia del 'Arte fans.

We have tried recording actual ad lib shows; but though the original show was highly successful, the re-run fell flat. Why? The reason is simply because, as every performer knows,

each audience is different in its response. Each different audience requires a delicate adjustment of tempo, approach, elaboration of details and content. Only an experienced ad libber can meet the demand of each audience and satisfy them more fully by attuning his presentation to their response. How painful to see someone ram a verbatim presentation down his audience's throat. How much more pleasant the show would have been if some contact between the audience's desires and the "script" had been made.

Many a time the contact between audience and puppeteer by the use of ad libbing has saved the show. Once, in the middle of Sarg's "Alice in Wonderland," the White Knight rushed onstage for his cue. The Knight's horse stopped, the Knight's body stopped, but the Knight's head went right on across the stage. The curtain closed for a moment, then parted. Again, the White Knight, rushed on, again his horse stopped, again his body stopped, only this time the head stopped, too. The Knight turned his head toward his audience with a haughty sneer: "Well . . . anyone is likely to lose his head once in awhile," . . . and went on with his part, the audience completely recaptured.

In our department store setups, ad libbing is invaluable. Often we have to set our stage close to the ground to get it under low beams.

Often we find some tot who, enthralled, stands up right in front of the stage, blocking the view from everyone. Nine times out of ten some passing ad lib remark from one of the puppets on stage will put him down on the floor again. If this fails, some

neighbor next to him will pull him down at the puppet's command.

Then, too, there is always the time a puppet must talk his way out of a snarled string or unforeseen mishap (it happens in the best puppet families). How embarrassing this can be if it interrupts a tape or record that continues to grind away heedless of the confusion. It is equally embarrassing to the puppeteer and audience if an accident interrupts a written script and he cannot think of an ad lib since he was concentrating on remembering the lines. The awful blank in line ruins not only tempo but tempers. Therefore, we like to be prepared for anything with the script at the tip of our tongues, not buried in memory.

The Commedia del 'Arte gives us another tip: simplification of characters. How important projection is in the puppet world! If the puppets' characters were as complicated as a detailed costume, the audience would never be able to pick out the main

points. The old Impromptu Masked Comedy used simple stock characters in simple characteristic costumes. The minute those characters appeared, the audience knew what was to be expected: Columbine would be flirtatious, Brighella would be the knave, Pantaloon the fool, down the list. None of us want to go that far in simplification, but we can get the same effect by simple strong lines of character and characteristic color and line. This old trick of character projection coupled with the fresh power of ad libbing can and does inject life in mere pieces of cloth and wood.

This is "old stuff" to the experienced puppeteer. Many of you use ad libbing, and I am sure those of you who do, agree with us, that even the most hardened realistic theatrical-minded person will admit that its brightness (when well done) has freshness no written play can touch. That is why we are Commedia del 'Arte enthusiasts.

The Parson's Touch

David Haimbach

If you ever have the pleasure of a visit from Rusty, the puppet clown, don't turn it down! Rusty, in case you don't know it, leads Lewis Parsons around by his strings; and Lewis is a puppet showman who has a special touch.

By his own admission, Lewis Parsons is a man who dislikes salesmanship. Being essentially modest, he lets his puppets do all of the selling. But put Lewis at his ease: let him start entertaining and his dislike of salesmanship is effaced by his love of showmanship. Rusty, Lewis and Little Red Riding Hood sold themselves right into our hearts. Let me tell you how it happened.

We engaged Lewis to spend two days in our school of 1100 children. We encompass the first six grades. Our bargain was for four showings of Little Red Riding Hood with Rusty and His Friends. To arouse interest in the show and prepare the children for the experience, Rusty with Lewis in tow, visited every one of 35 classrooms in the school. After a ten minute visit with Rusty, every child was sold on the idea of seeing the puppet show.

Groups of 300 at a time viewed the show which started off by establishing audience rapport with a song session. It is the use of music which makes Lewis Parsons' work unique. When seated at the piano, supplemented by

his Magic Instrument, Parsons is supreme. He is the monarch of every heart in the room and he very delicately leads his subjects into wholehearted participation in the audience experience. Status feelings are soon forgotten by even the most timid. When the spell has been cast over the children, the puppet show begins.

Music unifies the whole performance of Little Red Riding Hood. The same musicianship, the clever use of a Solovox, provides background music inserted by means of a tape recording. The script now reaches out and secures further audience identification as Parsons uses familiar names in casual, off-hand comment.

Even the big, bad wolf commands sympathy because his logic is so completely childlike, essentially human. At one point in the story a chipmunk steals a basket of cookies from the wolf. Off course the wolf had not come by them honestly in the first place.

"O-O-Oh! What a terrible thing to do!" cries the outraged wolf. "I wouldn't do a thing like that!"

This makes sense to children. They laugh sympathetically because the logic appeals to their sense of poetic justice.

It is an interesting phenomenon to watch a personality make itself felt. It cannot be adequately described, because language has no abstract symbols to represent the intangible reality of a personality. How can you describe a sudden affection? What words will tell what made the difference? The effort usually falls flat.

Lewis spent hours between shows

visiting classrooms. He played his piano-solovox combination whenever a small group congregated. He stirred our affection with music that seemed to flow spontaneously from his fingertips. He became a part of our lives for two days.

And what happened when the two days were quickly spent? Was this a passing fancy: a dream soon forgotten?

Lewis Parsons' visit was a moment of joy. A time to be remembered as a shining peak standing out above the drab plain of our lives. Aesthetic moments return to us to strengthen and make our lives more liveable. A special song, a special day, a special place, a special quality of living; these are the things that transcend the usual dullness of our lives. It is something of this special quality of a song, or a place, or a day that Lewis brought us.

What else made his visit memorable? It was a spur to growth. The reliving of a great experience through talking about it, and creatively expressing new ideas in a variety of ways helps children to develop their minds and spirits.

Parsons' show provided the inspiration for innumerable paintings in a variety of media. Thousands of words were written from simple letters of appreciation to scripts for new puppet shows. Problems of all sorts requiring research, planning and testing have evolved. How do you make a puppet- How do you build a stage? What play shall we give?

We hope Rusty leads Lewis Parsons into our midst many time in the years to come. Thanks Rusty!

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!
NOW!
GET A NEW MEMBER TODAY!**

Musical Pantomime with Puppets

Anne Thurman
(Evanston Junior League)

It all started at the Baton Rouge Puppet Festival. Four of us from the Evanston Junior League attended our first festival, and what an inspiration it proved to be. All the way back to Evanston we kept seeing Roberto Lago's delightful Sailor's Dance — four saucy sailors doing a spirited hornpipe. We too must have a puppet ballet. Our audiences of underprivileged children would surely love this gay kind of pantomime set to music. But where, and how do we start?

Back in Evanston we poured over Lewis Parson's wonderful mimeograph list of musical suggestions. Armed with this and several record catalogues, two of us visited our local record shop. We listened to many of the old favorites, "Night on Bald Mountain," "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies," "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue," but we were looking for something different, something fresh and exciting. To be quite truthful, we weren't sure what we were looking for. I guess we were waiting for that thunderbolt called inspiration to strike. And then it did, in the guise of an album of variety numbers composed and conducted by LeRoy Anderson. As we listened to "Sleighride," "Jazz Pizzacato," "Waltzing Cats" and "Syncopated Clock," we felt this was just right for hand puppets. Here was strong rhythm with varied tempo, and interesting instrumentation. This was gay and colorful music that evoked many images and suggested, in fact, demanded action.

Before long people were staring into the record booth, for there we were with our arms above our heads, twist-

ing, bending, gyrating to the strong beat of the "Syncopated Clock." We ticked and tocked and rang our alarm bells in time with the music. Then came a slower, softer passage. This sounded like a weary man getting ready for bed. We could see him dressed in night shirt and cap, yawning and stretching as he winds his giant sized clock. Then he fixes his pillow and blanket and settles down for a good sleep. But not for long, for a series of very insistent rings come into the music. The clock seems to enjoy the teasing. The sleepy man rolls from side to side, hides his head under the covers, and just then the clock impishly pulls the covers off. Seizing a mop, the sleepy man chases the clock, knocks him out and stands on the stage triumphantly brandishing the mop. Here was a simple story line that could be conveyed by pantomime alone — it involved only two characters, it had humor, conflict, and the chase and victory. But could we refine it, so that each beat of the music had meaning, so that not one movement was vague or ill defined? We were only amateur puppeteers — volunteers in a service organization. We later found discipline of the rhythm a challenge that helped us overcome many sloppy habits in manipulation.

"Sleighride" was to become our favorite. As we first listened to it, the galloping hoofbeats called for horses. But we didn't see a sleigh or skaters in it. What other characters could use that part of the music that didn't have hoofbeats? How about a fox hunt? Yes, a beguiling fox pursued by an eager hound. Now for the huntsmen: one should be a woman in

a black habit riding side saddle on a dappled mare. The man, in red with a top hat would ride a black horse. Oh, won't this be fun. Little did we realize at this point the hours it would take to work out the choreography. How many times would we have to set the phonograph needle down on that one phrase while we tried and tried to find the right puppet movement. Actually it took four weeks of rehearsal and an intensive three-day work-out with our Junior League Puppetry Consultant, Jean Wiksell, to get many of the spots worked out.

The music for "Sleighride," which became "Tally Ho" for us had two definite themes — one we used for the huntsmen and one for the fox and hound. Each of the themes had four variations, which meant we had eight short scenes in all to develop our story. To simplify things backstage, we visualized the hunt as going in circles: puppets always entering left and exiting right. We begin with a brief introduction of each character, then the fox darts on, looks back twice to see if she is being followed, and runs off. In comes the hound at high speed, ears flopping. He loses the scent, picks it up again and runs off after the fox. The male horseman gallops in, circles the stage twice, looking off right and left for hound and then exits. The fox enters again and, knowing she is being followed, stops at the side of stage to preen herself. The hound runs in again, taps her on the shoulder and is shoved haughtily across the stage. He tries again more cautiously and this time they go out together. Now the lady on horseback comes in, her horse rearing on the accented beat (the four beat gallop music has now been varied with an accent and sound of whip cracking.) She circles twice and is joined by the male rider. As they circle together, the horses execute a jump on the accented beat. As they leave, the fox-hound theme changes to a syncopated

jazzy beat and the fox and hound join in jitterbug-rumba. This is followed by a formal dance by the horses. The last theme is slow and sweet as the fox and hound come in arm in arm. The hound pats her nose, nuzzles her ears and strokes her tail. The sound of hoof beats and a blaring neigh scare them away as the music comes to a swift climax.

During the first rehearsals it seemed we could never get all the action into the short space of time and into the rigid rhythmic pattern. But this very discipline forced us constantly to eliminate all unnecessary action. We found that the stronger the story, the better the final choreography. It seemed to us that a straight dance with no particular character relationships or development made it harder for us to create interesting movements. Essentially, the over-all plan had progressed like this: first, selecting music that fired the imagination and whose rhythm seemed to fit the abilities of puppets; second, developing a strong story — stripped to essentials in terms of puppet action (This was a period of trial and error, demanding every effort to achieve variety, playing one short phase of the music over and over until every puppet movement was definite and nothing hit-or-miss remained; and third, rehearsal until precision of every movement was achieved, particularly when more than one puppeteer was involved.

We feel that the inclusion of these musical pantomimes in our program has been stimulating to us as puppeteers and fun for our audiences. Children can relax for a few minutes to enjoy the rhythm of the clock and fox hunt and then be all the more ready to give their entire attention to the play that follows. We thank those creative people at the Baton Rouge and Minneapolis Festival who opened our eyes to all the wonderful things puppets can be and do.

A Report to the Members

Basil Milovsoroff

(Chairman of the National Puppetry Festival Committee)

Puppetry Festivals are the major manifestation of the activity of the P of A. They have been important milestones in the career of many of us and therein lies much of their real value.

One must resist, however, the temptations to glorify them by publicity overstatements, and must honestly admit that there has not been a conspicuous growth in the scope and stature of the Festivals as one Festival has succeeded another, although in some directions growth undoubtedly has happened. Rather, the Festivals seem to have jelled into a kind of interesting "school." Its "curriculum" seems not to change much from year to year, yet it has proven itself adequate to a constant succession of new entrants; it initiated many talented toward fine individual achievements; and happily, it has managed to provide each year a program of shows presenting a survey of some of the fine puppetry by the more accomplished. It has not deliberately engaged in definitions, or attempted to chart ways. Thus the Festivals have performed an exceptional service in disseminating puppetry, but have not raised in proportion the standards of quality. Our most conspicuous puppetmasters in and out of the P of A are still the self-made, talented people whose fine attainments, one may add, are more instinctive than premeditated.

Speaking figuratively, (if we overlook a few phenomena) today's puppetry is like an agglomeration of wind-sown flowers of variety of shapes and hues. Some are lovely, some are even striking, but their quality is that of chance. Their arrangement is by the

will of the winds and, practically every specie still may proclaim in the words of the edited version of an old ditty: "I'm a little prairie flower. Ha! Ha! I'm wild." In truth they are not like the flowers in the wonderful garden we call THEATRE, in which and incessant study and elaboration sweat and toil, love and devotion, of carefully noted past experience by generations of individuals produced highly cultivated magnificent flowers.

Puppet Theatre has produced no truly devoted philosophers and sensitive scholars, although it had and has masters with deft hands and clever minds. In the golden era in the 18th century when puppets attained an important degree of public recognition, the showman, who played in Paris next to the Comedie Francaise, and set a heterogeneous mob to rocking the public square with thunderous laughter at his lampoons of great dramas presented by the above rotund institution, knew the puppets and their peculiar milieu, but he knew them, as some of us today, mostly by instinct, and apparently had no ability to analyze and to make notations of his thoughts, ideas, and experience for the benefit of future generations.

Some great literati of that era, and later, liked the puppets and occasionally used them. However, their real interest was not in puppets per se but incidental to the promotion of their own art of literary drama. They did not find the puppet flexible enough for their broad purposes, and being wise men, left him along with some nice words which we can quote. now and ten, in defense of puppets' respectability.

The first half of this century produced more printed matter on Puppet Theatre than all the centuries of history combined, but alas, to put it crudely, most of it is a rehash of elementary mechanics, and thus we are still, to use another figure of speech, like children tossing up a colorful balloon filled with air and wonder why it will not really rise, unaware of the simple fact that to fulfill its proper function it must be inflated with the proper elements that make it go up.

The puppet theatre is in need of conscious study, experiment, and all other available means to clarify its character, its true functional capabilities, and to explore the nature of elements with which it can best fulfill its prime function of making Theatre in its own right — a Puppet Theatre.

The Festivals are well suited for this purpose. However, they must cease to be a "school" with a curriculum", however fine, and revert to what, I believe, was their originally intended meaning — a CONFERENCE with its simple purpose to assess and to confer on how to better. To do this successfully it will take, on one hand, participation of many talented and imaginative people with inquisitive and generous minds, capable of humility and of respect for differences of view, and on the other, an understanding on the part of those who just come to learn, or to enjoy, that they can eventually learn, or enjoy, vastly more, if the atmosphere of these conferences is stimulating and attractive to those who can contribute the most.

Some changes take much time. This one most certainly will. We can make a small start in this direction at the Festival at Dartmouth. The first release on this Festival, enclosed with the last Puppetry Journal, suggested an outline, part of which perhaps bears restatement in different words.

We do not plan to lecture to anyone. (The only lecture I would like to

keep, if the Committee will not turn it down, is one offered by Betty Percy on: "How To Make a Living With Puppets.").

The growing interest in puppet film making and puppets in TV suggests more serious consideration of these. The plan is to handle these in discussion-demonstration panels, involving our own and Canadian puppet film makers and TV puppeteers, films, kinescopes, commentary, and some questioning from the floor by those interested. The films will be emphasized further by two matinees of selected puppet, cartoon, and art films, open to the general public, and in informal late evening showings of special films for those especially interested.

The more pertinent parts of panel exchange of views will be recorded on tape by Ralph Little, sound engineer (NBC) and may be edited for publication after the Festival.

At this date the schedule of shows is too fluid to make an announcement, but by the time this will come out in print, a month hence, the program will be complete. The problem has been that of obtaining shows which will cover a variety of aspects of puppetry well, rather than inviting familiar name shows.

Experimental show hours are filled largely by Guild and other group shows (Philadelphia, Detroit, Minneapolis, Evanston, and others), and with a few professionals trying out some of their experiments.

Proximity to Canada gives us a wonderful opportunity to play host to a very large number of Canadian Puppeteers and offer them our friendship and hospitality. To make them feel at home a whole day is allotted to their activities to be designated as "Canada Day." It will be filled with shows representing both English and French Canada. Conway, Merten, Vellemans, possibly Daudelin, and many others are contributing their

talents.

The Puppet Mardi Gras, which will end the Festival, has to be moved from the Bema to the College Stadium for valid reasons. This will have no effect on the program. We will have tables, hot dogs and soda pop, a dozen night club and variety puppeteers (the finest we can get), Vermont fiddlers, square dance exhibition, and participation by those of us good at it, and lots of sound, and gay music.

The Puppet and Art Exhibition will not only take up the seven galleries at Carpenter, but also Baker Library foyer, and the College Museum. Puppetry will be supplemented by reproductions of paintings, sculptures, cartoons, stage and costume design, puppet posters, sketches of puppet design, books. The expansion of the exhibition beyond puppets is being done with the purpose of pointing to professional and amateur puppeteers the great wealth of material and ideas they can draw upon for production. To be represented in the Exhibit one must send his best photos, posters, and puppets before June 15th.

The broadening of the Institute work is done to offer advance technics to those who have mastered the fundamentals and are anxious to improve upon them.

There are many who look to night club work with puppets. The course

will not be taught by night club puppeteers, because the foundation of the good night club variety puppet work is in good training in the fundamentals of that phase of puppetry, and they should learn these from the real masters who know all the tricks.

In offering Creative Puppet Design, which I shall teach myself, I had in mind largely the puppeteers and art teachers who have an inclination for the artistic and want to try their hand at an approach to puppets from the purely creative side, uninhibited by conventions.

Visiting instructors will assist the skeleton staff in important matters such as music, writing, night club routine, etc.

The Festival is not going to be a 100% success. Nothing really ever is, but we will try to initiate a curve, and probably will have enough excitement and stimulating fresh experience to please most everyone.

This may not be the right way to sell the Festival, but it is too difficult, if not impossible, to live up to the advertising cliches. Whether your reaction to what you read in this report is: "This sounds great," or "This fellow is a bit 'tetchy,'" or "That's what you think," come to the Festival at Dartmouth, make your contribution, and tell him, or tell him off!

In Tribute

We are extremely sorry to hear of the death of Edward (Nicholas Nelson, one of our pioneer puppeteers, who passed away recently at the home of his daughter, Lorainne Mackey, in Chicago. We extend our sincerest sympathy to his family. The P of A has lost an honored member.

Beginning to work with puppets in

1899, he was active in the profession until last winter, his last work the making of the puppets for the Kungsholm Theater in Chicago.

We caught a brief radio report of the death of Florence Bufano, wife of the late Remo Bufano, at her home in N. Y. No details were available.



PUPPET PARADE

(see photo section)

PAS DE VOODOO

The accompanying photograph is of the finger puppet cast for Herb Schefel's tiny ballet PAS DE VOODOO, completed recently. Reading clockwise, the puppets are: the voodoo dancer, the voodoo drummer and the witch doctor.

The little timber thespians are further experimentation in the fingerine medium of puppetry, which grows more and more interesting for Herb. Last Summer, at the Minneapolis puppetry festival, Bruce Bucknell turned over a tiny 12-inch long black light to Herb, which started him experimenting with the light and Stroblite. In the darkness, under the beam of a blacklight, Stroblite glows with a neon-like brilliance. Under ordinary light these same materials appear a rather brassy-garrish, and murderous color. All materials used were treated with Stroblite — fabrics, fringes, wired tubing, sequins and paint. Feathers, for some reason or other, are the only things the Stroblite Company is unable to treat.

Each finger puppet has a "built-in sound effect" — i.e., baby rattles, tiny bells, gourds, etc., so that if a recording, piano, drums or a small orchestra are unavailable, the tempo for the number could be beat out with the puppets by the manipulator. This idea was a push-over for this particular (jungle) number, which took many, many weeks to build and lasts no longer than two and one-half minutes on stage.

Preliminary sketches, designs, color swatches of all materials used, photo-

graphs and the actual puppets, will be on display at the 1954 Puppeteers of America festival, at the Carpenter Galleries, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. Y., in June.

EVANSTON JUNIOR LEAGUE

Anne Thurman says, "We were only amateur puppeteers." "Musical Pantomime with Puppets," in this issue illustrated here with puppets from "The Persistent Clock" and "Tally Ho" makes this hard to believe.

Nowhere can you find a better lesson on puppet choreography! How different from the usual puppet dance . . . a puppet floundering hopelessly on with one or two movements, often just plain "jiggles," to the end of a long, long record.

Here is puppet action as it should be, fired by imagination and the stimulation of effective music in the hands of a group who were willing to spend time in intelligent planning and hours of tiresome rehearsal. Try it, and you will have what Evanston Junior League had, an outstanding performance.

CAN CAN CATS

From the Kelly Puppet Studio come the "Can-Can Cats." We are not sure which of the Kelly's produced these charming dancers, with all the family attending Institute, we surmise that they all had a hand in their production and operation. Having watched the progress made by the Proctor children, the Rose children, and several other families of young puppeteers, we

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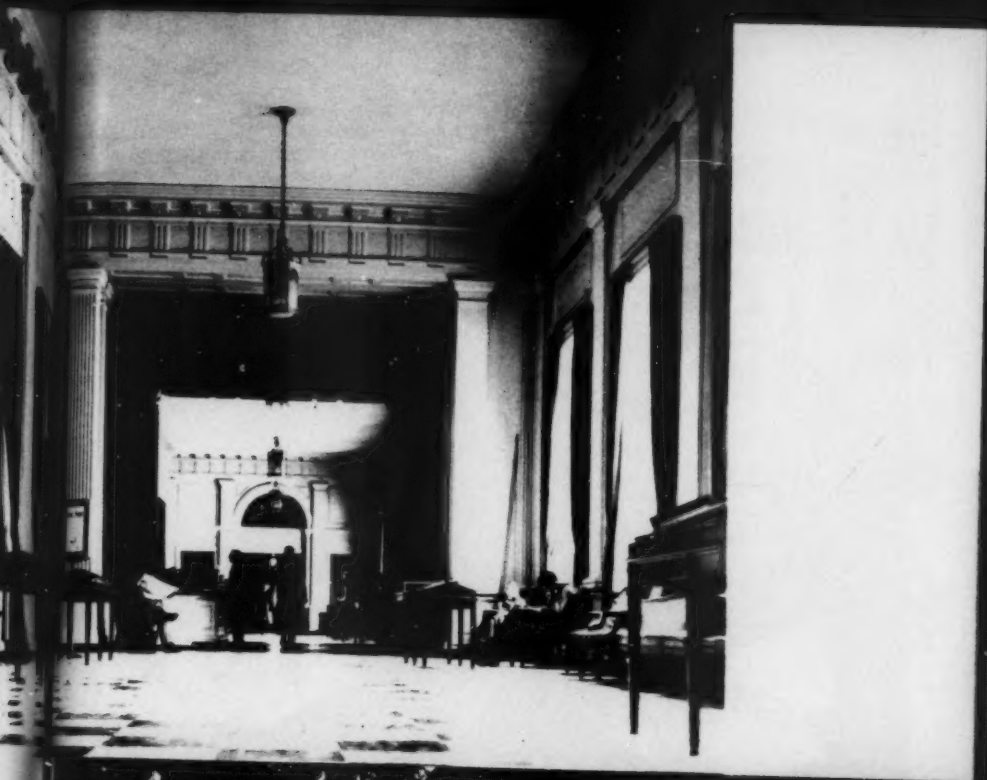
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FESTIVAL

at

DARTMOUTH







TONY WILLIAMS



A STAR IS BORN





THE PARSON'S TOUCH

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feel that somehow "puppeteer families" must have a special advantage over "just normal families," so "hats off" to the Kellys! May we have many more "Institute families" like them.

FESTIVAL AT DARTMOUTH

The tranquility and beauty of New England is depicted in every photograph of Dartmouth, from the quiet campus to the stately architecture of the Baker Library Foyer, where foreign and historical puppets and books will be housed.

The scene from King Lear is typical of Dartmouth's famed dramatic productions, part of the cultural life of the community.

Basil has tried to tell you in his "Report to the Members," some of the innovations which he hopes to bring about at this Festival — a Festival which he hopes will be truly a Festival of the Arts, not just a Festival of Puppetry.

TONY WILLIAMS

Naturally the Williams would have good ideas to support worthy causes. Perhaps those responsible for contributing to coming seal campaigns may be helped by their ideas.

Eleven-year-old Tony Williams and his Christmas Seal puppet did such an outstanding piece of promotion work for the Ramsey County Tuberculosis and Health Association during the 1953 Christmas Seal Sale that Tony received special recognition as "citizen extraordinary" from the St. Paul Federal Savings and Loan association.

Tony is the son of the late Lemuel Williams who was co-chairman of the 1953 Festival in Minneapolis. His mother, Mary, worked at state Christmas Seal headquarters - the Minnesota Tuberculosis and Health association.

The 1953 Christmas Seal lent itself to puppetry, for it pictured a child

singing a Christmas carol. Lem, Mary and Tony produced a puppet that was an exact replica and dressed Tony to match. They appeared on television stations and at many special meetings of Christmas Seal volunteers and other civic gatherings.

A STAR IS BORN

Judy Garland returns to the screen for the first time in four years in "A Star Is Born," in Technicolor, directed by George Cukor and produced for Warner Bros. by Sid Luft.

We regret that in four news releases we received, not one line was devoted to the marionette angle, in fact the puppeteer was not even identified. We apologize to Bob Baker for not recognizing his "Bobo," in last month's issue, it had been incorrectly inscribed on back . . . now we may have to apologize again to Bob, but we are sure that the puppeteer in "A Star Is Born" is he. If it isn't he has a twin.

THE PARSON'S TOUCH

David Haimbach of Corpus Christi, Texas, writes, "I am submitting the enclosed photograph and manuscript, 'The Parson's Touch' as a tribute to Lewis Parsons. I have tried to convey something of the effect Lewis had in our school community. The photograph tells more graphically the story of Lewis' effect than all the words I can use.

For background you must know that almost all of the children in Austin Elementary School are of Latin-America extraction. Most of them come from homes where Spanish is spoken. We consider language teaching the most important skill we can impart. First of all, however, we need to develop a quality of living for our children that will make school the outstanding experience of their lives. Lewis helped us in this task. We are grateful!

Bargain Days!

Margie Kelly

Going to the Festival? Wonderful! We went last year, and it is an adventure in puppetry for the whole family. It's every puppeteer dream rolled into four days of fun, fantasy and fraternization. Pull all the strings you can to get there and you'll find it is all you expected and more. But that needn't be all. Not if you're —

Staying for Institute? I hope you'll say yes as we did last year. That is the place to learn puppetry from the people who not only have the knowledge and experience to teach it, but the time to take a personal interest in YOU. The group is small and a spirit of eager-to-learn gait pervades from the first moment. The instructors have spent many hours working out a course that will appeal to you no matter what your puppets background or level.

From the first, you know they've succeeded as they explain how the course will be conducted. As you begin work the accompaniment for the task is lively chatter. You have time to really get acquainted with others who want to know more about good puppetry. Soon you find yourself exchanging ideas with other students as you work, which becomes a

valuable part of the course.

The instructors sense just when to offer help and are always right there to answer questions. There are established hours, but no one wants to quit work just to eat so a snack is brought in. But you do go out for most meals — with another puppeteer or two and the discussions go on.

Like all good things — your time does end after all. What are the results? To us, the results cannot be measured in technical knowledge alone — although we received more of that than we had imagined possible. With us, the results most treasured are the inspiration and the satisfaction of being the students of leading professionals. Now we know our marionettes are well made and we are inspired to experiment with different techniques and materials because we have had sound basic training and can always go back to it if our experiments fail. Before Institute was established, such knowledge could be obtained from professionals only by becoming apprenticed to an established troupe — an impossible attainment for hobbyists. Now this opportunity is open to all — the biggest bargain in puppetry today. Don't pass it up.

Puppeteers Are Friendly People

Robert Williams

A little boy bumped into me in the school hall, bounced back and looked up, "Say," he said, "You're one of the puppets aren't you?" He gave me a big grin and I grinned back. If I'm

not one of the puppets I must be almost. The Professor (one of our puppets), asked me the other day where my strings were. I told him they were invisible. "Oh," he said,

"I wondered why I couldn't see 'em."

I'm going to divorce myself from being a puppet for a little and be a looker at puppets and puppeteers. First I'm going to look at the Yale Puppeteers. Something unique in puppets I think. During our travels and playing in Europe we were fortunate in seeing a variety of puppet shows but nothing quite like the witty musical comedies done with fine regard for puppet ability at the Turnabout Theatre.

The Yale Puppeteers are friendly people and take other puppeteers in like members of the family. For ourselves they have helped us on numerous occasions. Last time we were at Turnabout we took our two boys with us. Their eyes certainly popped when they saw the layout backstage. A marvelous shop. A twenty-foot work bench, cabinets and drawers neatly labeled with every imaginable puppet part. Three or four complete shows flying on racks over our heads. Harry took us upstairs where more shows hung and worked some of the puppets for us, easily bringing them to life out of context. It's a wonderful set-up. My kids thought we were pikers after they saw Turnabout.

We called on Ralph Chesse. He has a downtown studio in San Francisco, equipped with stage and workshop and like the rest of us, puppets hanging all about. We first saw Ralph Chesse in Blanding Sloan's theater on Montgomery street, long ago. He is a small, vivacious man who looks like Papa Puppet himself. We found him surrounded with manuscripts for his "Brother Buzz" show. Very amusing material. We also saw some of the puppets for this show which readers of this Journal have seen pictured herein. Ralph Chesse's Marionettes have never toured and have always played in his own theatre.

There are others in California, but the above covers my present knowledge, therefore let us go now to the

Puget Sound country. Seattle is headquarters for two professional companies. Aurora Valeninetti (what a wonderful name for a puppeteer!) is head of the University of Washington's Puppetry Department, and also has a marionette company of her own. She also sings in summer opera in Seattle. Currently I understand, she is working on a new show. She is out of the stationwagon class, having what I took to be a five-ton van to haul her equipment. The show we saw was a hand puppet show and very nicely done too, with good looking puppets and a nice setup.

Don George is the other Seattleite. Don and his cute wife, Doris, present the Don George Marionettes in Revue. Don is one of the numerous puppeteers who once worked for Tony Sarg. He's a big jolly fellow. He and I sometimes compete on the golf course, or our families go on picnics. We always have fun. He is a peripatetic puppeteer, playing all over the country. They play many nightclub dates. Don is a wonderful entertainer.

Speaking of the Williams Marionettes of Puyallup (You can pronounce it at a gallup.) we like the work. We live on North Hill and when we step out on a bright morning to drive to, say Sequim or Mukilteo, there's that mountain right in our lap. She's big, Mount Ranier, perhaps thirty air miles away, 14,400 ft. high, perpetually snow covered, glaciers glistening like a tiara around her throat and the Cascades' sharp peaks marching off on either side. Maybe this will be one of the days that include a ferry trip on Puget Sound, "The Sea in the Forest," as Archie Binns calls it, giving us a bit of blue water and the circling gulls. Or maybe it's the day, walking down the street after a show, when a little girl ran up to me, grabbed my hand, skipped along with me and chatted about the puppets.

During our playing season, October through May, I try to write a new

play each year. If the play meets approval from the rest of the company — we spend the summer making it. I am accumulating quite a pile of unproduced plays and my wife says, unwritten plays. We make an effort to do original plays and try to use the American scene and American folk-

lore. We use a stationwagon to carry our equipment and play approximately a hundred shows a season to about sixty thousand children.

We not only do all the above but lately we find our evenings taken up with algebra and fractions and such — This is rugged, yes!

Rhythm Puppets Summer Theater

Dottie Gleason

A red barn on a Connecticut hillside is the setting for the annual presentations of the Rhythm Puppets Summer Theatre. The puppeteers are girls, ages six to sixteen, at Noyes Junior Camp, Portland, Connecticut. The camp is interested in developing growth in personality through creative expression. This is achieved by varied activities in arts and crafts, dramatics, music, and rhythmic dance forms.

The puppetry project is a stimulating group activity in which the campers gain valuable experience in creative effort toward a definite goal. It was introduced in 1946 when I joined the camp staff as crafts director, and we have developed it successfully for the past eight summers. The productions are whimsical, artistic, and often spontaneous. A puppet sometimes turns out to look a great deal like the child who made it.

The campers first made hand puppets from paper mache'. We grated damp rolls of newspaper into feathery pieces by scraping the rolls across a piece of metal lath that was supported in a wooden frame. The fluffy paper scraps were mixed into wallpaper paste until it reached the consistency of modeling clay. Heads were modeled with this material, using a greased dowel stick for support. When dry, they were removed from the

stick and painted with tempera or poster paints. The finished heads were sprayed with Krylon, a plastic lacquer, to protect them from the wear and tear of rehearsing and performing.

This method worked out very well, but it had some disadvantages. Since our workshop is exposed to the whims of the weather, the paper mache' heads never dried during a rainy spell and often grew luxuriant crops of green mold. Then we hauled them into the camp kitchen to dry beside the stove. Some of the smaller children with weak fore-fingers had difficulty in holding up the paper mache' heads during the show, because of their weight. So we introduced puppets made from sock darners which could be controlled very well by holding the handle.

For the past three summers, all the puppets have had wooden potato mashers for heads. The features were constructed from bits of felt, wood scraps, and odd beads that were glued on to the head in a very stylized fashion. For hair, we used cotton rug yarn, fur, leather, theatrical crepe hair, chenille covered wire, and parts of Halloween wigs. Both features and hair were glued on to the wooden heads with a latex product known as "Puppetmold." Even the seams of

costumes could be pasted together with this marvelous adhesive. It works best on cotton materials. Puppetmold is a casting compound for making flexible rubber puppet heads, but its use as an adhesive is invaluable to the puppet maker.

When the puppets were near completion, the campers worked out skits and variety acts for the show. We wrote most of our own material in order to include the heterogeneous group of characters that had been created. Last summer there was a run on making girl heads with blonde braids. We had seven of these innocuous characters to incorporate into the production. Two were cast as sisters in a fairy tale, another was the farmer's daughter in a skit, and the other four participated in a most hilarious square dance.

The camper-puppeteers are encouraged to express themselves by making any type of character they care to, rather than work from a set list in a play. This stimulates originality, and the maker must do some thinking

about what his puppet could do as part of the show. When the various story scripts are worked out, we rehearse each skit separately several times to decide on the appropriate "business." Then we go through the whole show in sequence.

Usually, two reliable campers act as stage managers behind the scenes to see that properties are in place and that the puppeteers come on at the right time. Our handpuppet stage is built according to the Entriken design and works out very well. The smaller children stand on a wooded step inside the stage so that they can hold their puppets on the stage level. We have a versatile staff pianist who can make mood music like witches prowling in the forest, or like flowers dancing in a meadow. We also use recordings to establish musical backgrounds.

The campers are enthusiastic puppeteers and look forward each year to the next production of the Rhythm Puppets Summer Theatre.

A Workshop in Mexico

We hear that Marjorie Batchelder and Virginia Comer will hold a workshop in Creative Drama and Puppetry in two New Mexico Universities — University of Mexico, Albuquerque, June 7 through 17 and Highlands University, Las Vegas, July 19 through August 20.

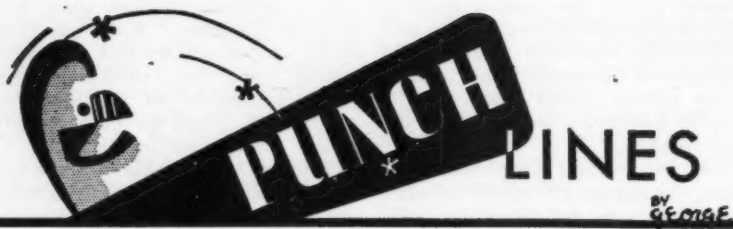
These workshops carrying University credit are especially designed for classroom teachers of art and drama, children's librarians and recreation leaders.

The accent of the courses will be on practicability and imagination through the use of common materials and

tools. There will be emphasis on puppets quickly constructed with presentation of proven techniques for choosing and adapting material suitable for successful dramatization.

Students will have a chance to gain experience in spontaneous playing of well known and original story material under the able direction of Virginia Lee Comer, Yale graduate, and well known in children's Theatre groups for her directing and her play editing.

Marjorie will furnish the instruction in puppetry and make available her fine exhibit of historical puppets.



PUNCH LINES

BY George

295 East Buchtel Avenue - Akron 4, Ohio

Television is a crazy business! In Chicago, (says TIME), "Elmer the Elephant," the ear-flapping cloth hero of a local NBC-TV show, calmly went on advising kiddies to brush their tusks every day while a pair of A. F. L. unions battled over his insides. One union claims that the undercover man manipulating Elmer's trunk with his arm is an artist; the other insists he is merely a stagehand handling a prop. The National Labor Relations Board is now trying to decide whether NBC has violated a labor practice law by giving the job to a performer instead of a stagehand. In New York, the Bil and Cora Baird puppets were competing with a chimpanzee! As the novelty attraction on the new CBS "Morning Show," their light-hearted antics fill the bill in much the same way that J. Fred Muggs (celebrated chimp) does for Dave Garroway's "Today" on NBC. At that hour (7-9 a.m.) viewers have a choice of monkeyshines.

Commercial on Soundstage TV by Gayle and Doug Anderson—finger puppets in a lively can-can dance.

In Toronto, John Conway decided against renewing his contract, and on April 2, after two highly successful years (15 min. daily), his characters, Uncle Chichimus and Hollyhock, made their last appearance. Stuart Griffiths, program director of CBS-TV was reluctant to see them go . . . "The CBC would be very pleased and happy to carry on the Uncle Chichimus series, which has developed into something of

an institution in Canadian television, but we must accede to Mr. Conway's wishes." Burr Tillstrom's "Kukla, Fran and Ollie" (NBC-TV) was shifted to a 5:30 p.m. Sunday spot, and will now be seen only three weeks out of every four. The Kuklapolitans will vacation once a month. At the third annual AFTRA Awards Luncheon in Cleveland, Glen Rowell and Puppeteer Cy Kelly walked off with three of the awards - for the best TV weather reporting, best live TV children's program, and best television commercial announcing.

Before the Academy Awards, Ed Sullivan revealed his vote for the Best Actress award - Leslie Caron in "Lili" and showed a scene with the puppets from the film. Unfortunately things did not turn out this way, but we heard the pic with Walton & O'Rourke's magic was given a Royal Command performance for Queen Elizabeth and Phillip during their recent tour of Australia. "Kukla, Fran and Ollie" were guests on the Dave Garroway evening show and Bil and Cora Baird popped up to provide background for Eartha Kitt's rendition of "Somebody Bad Stole The Wedding Bell" on "Toast of the Town's" fifth anniversary show. Archie Elliott turned up on WEWS-TV (Cleveland) during Brotherhood Week to perform his one-man show. Jerry Carroll did an educational tv show at his college (Ames, Iowa) in May. Tom Tichenor, Nashville, Tenn., has a dog, Poindex-

ter, who appears four days a week on a local TV educational program. City health officials awarded Poindexter a dog tag and papers after he was vaccinated on a recent TV show to help promote the anti-rabies drive. The enterprising Tichenor, and his assistant, Marsha Thomas, are also shooting a 12 minute color film about a medieval puppeteer and his wife, and how St. Nicholas performed a little miracle to help them. In San Francisco, Lettie Connell has been getting a heap of praise for her hand puppets on "The Looking Glass Lady Show." Her characters include Cuthbert, a rabbit who sings and dances, and Erma Lou Pinefeathers, a lady duck, or duck lady . . . who goes in for impromptu bursts of song. They were joined by Nils, a silent seal, who plays cymbols with the San Francisco Symphony occasionally. Sounds like a bang-up show.

Fred Allen's "Judge for Yourself" (NBC-TV) used the dog-bites-man switch on a popular theme. Camera shot through a "gobo" of a puppet stage to live actors with strings attached, for an effective bit. March 21 "You Asked For It" featured George Prentis doing his "Punch and Judy" with a fast look from out front and backstage.

VARIETY & SPICE. After almost a year below the equator, Walton & O'Rourke will wind up their starring duties in "Folies Bergere" in New Zealand and head back for the USA at the end of this month. Recently, they, and members of the company, staged an impromptu performance for Maori tribesmen, and in turn were entertained by native chants and dances. We overheard that Bob Bromley was back in this country after a long and successful stay in England. We have a further follow-up on the anonymous puppets at the Lido in Paris. It comes from "Paris Diary" by Harry Evans in the April "Family Circle" (Krogers) mag. "Please let me try to describe

one of the acts that left me bug-eyed — Georges Lafaye's Marionettes. M. Lafaye's imaginative creatures are no ordinary puppets whose movements are controlled by strings. They are large illuminated figures that glide, cavort and fly all about the darkened stage. In one fantastic illusion, called "Valse des Papillons," huge, many-hued butterflies flit through the air in three-quarter cadence. The trick: Lafaye's manipulators work from under a black canopy that completely conceals them from the audience." The slick marionettes that Sid Krofft uses in his act were created especially for him by Lem Williams and John Shirley, though for publicity purposes, the credit goes elsewhere.

Marshall Izen opened April 15 at the Village Vanguard in N. Y., and the New Yorker reports that he and his puppets "march through the Metropolitan's repertory like Sherman to the sea."

Mrs. H. A. Peeling of Ft. Wayne, Ind. sent us the "Amerikanische Puppenspielrevue" column from the German "Der Komet" in which her name was mentioned, but ach and Bach, we couldn't diggen zei gist, because somebody translation geimitten forgotten.

The Lessellis (Les and Ellie Heath) are offering a new show this fall — "Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves." Roy Etherington spent spring on a booking tour for the Colemans. The Dean Raymonds (WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, Tex.) are planning to be a threesome in September. Shirley O'Donnol has her eye on New York for this summer. Louise and Kent Moore are sporting spritely new stationery featuring their m. c. Abernathy, and publicity on their show and "Capsule Capers" variety. Max Croft and Charles Perry (Brunswick, Ga.) are working on a puppet version of "Macbeth" for their senior class. Recently they made a jaunt to Yulee, Florida to the Puppet Patio of Frank and Irene Still. The Still's Circus program, which used to quar-

ter in Cleveland, now includes the Magic Nutcracker. They are quite proud of the fact they are the only people to appear two years consecutively under the White House roof. Tonny Nolles and his Dutch puppets appeared at the Henry Street Playhouse program "Saturdays at 3." David Syrotiak, West Haven, Conn. high school senior, is looking for a job with a marionette company. In addition to trouping experience with Suzaris, he has appeared in school production as the Stage manager in "Our Town" and the title role in "The Boor."

Rod Young hopped down to Atlanta for a visit with Ruth and Don Gilpin, whose Woody Willow show is still going strong on WSB-TV — more sponsors than they can handle. Rod played the lead in the May production of "The Man Who Came to Dinner" at Western College for Women, Oxford, Ohio. Caroline Lutz, on her sabbatical at the University of Hawaii this semester, bumped into Shadow showmen Pauline Benton and Arvo Wirta doing a stint of shows there.

COVER TO COVER. Oliver J. Dragon featured in a double-page spread for Pard dog food in the March I LIFE. The McCall's special issue "Children's Playthings" featuring spool and sock marionettes (pp. 62-63) Priced at \$1.00. April issue of AMERICAS, monthly magazine published by the Pan American Union in English, Spanish and Portuguese bylined Peggy Munoz for "Drama in Miniature" — on the work of the Teatro Guignol (three groups under the National Institute of Fine Arts in Mexico City), of which the "Nahual" group, headed by Roberto Lago, is the leading company. Excellent pictures of puppets, productions and audiences. Grade Teacher magazine for May has a "Things to Make Section" — Verna Grisier McCully suggests "Peanut Puppets" Five peanuts, of varying sizes, strung together make the com-

plete puppet. No directions given for keeping the young puppeteers from gobbling down a whole show. Page 79 in the March Theatre Arts has a picture of puppets in Kabuki drama. And just for fun, there's the Easter cover of McCall's with some show-how tips on colorful, simplified design. The Children's drawings in the April 5 TIME could also unfetter your imagination. Reynolds "Do-It-Yourself" aluminum has a folder out giving hints for handling (with ordinary wood-working tools) of their product, which might be incorporated in puppet stages, etc.

MOVIES. Martin and Olga Stevens have just completed a sound-color 16 mm marionette film on Safety for the J. C. Penney Co. The crew at their Middlebury, Ind. studio included Ginger Brearton (Conn.) Don Sahlin (N. Y.), Roy Patton (Calif.), George Latshaw (Ohio) and Ernie and Flossie Dufour and Chuck Mather (Ind.) Some unbelievably brilliant bits of manipulation by Don Sahlin spark a good deal of the films comedy — star climbing, pratt falls, and other impossibilities. Naturally, we were full of questions about Sahlin's work on the Myerburg "Hansel and Gretel" — since he has animated Gretel and other figures for a good bit of footage. The difficult technique of stop-action photography has more hazards than you might suspect. Animators pop up through trap doors in the set to make the minute changes for each shot . . . then pop out of sight like rabbits for the take. The mammoth sets are handsomely designed and cleverly executed with a special papier mache technique. We understand that Anna Russell, as the voice of the Witch, is apt to steal the show. Pictures of Myerburg's "Kinemins" were the subject of a colorful double-page spread in the April 2 Colliers. Cinerama's second film "Cinerama Holiday," now in production, will have the actors visit a puppet show in Italy and

France. The Liberty Mutual Insurance Company of Boston has produced a sound and color marionette film entitled "Peter and the Whiffle-Hound" for showing on a Safety program in the schools. N. Y. Times says of it, "... tells how the whiffle-hound, whose eyes glow red when danger threatens the hero and green when walking conditions are safe, leads his master safely to a birthday party in spite of the effort of the imp, Danger, to get him killed by urging him to disregard traffic rules to save time." Miss Janet Ballou accompanies the film and uses a felt demonstration board and cardboard cut-outs of the characters in an audience-participation session at the end.

A card from Rome from Helen Haiman Joseph. While she was strolling in the Pincio with thousands of Romans one Sunday, she caught the end of a Punch and Judy show. Then 'Pulchinella let down a tiny tin pail for the children's pennies. Striking brochure with handsomely lit puppet photographs came in the mail from Walter Buttner, Masche L. Luneburg.

Once again, we'd like to acknowledge the tremendous help this column has received from Milton Halpert of N. Y. City. Clippings from the N. Y. dailies, national magazines, and direct reports on tv have done much to keep us well informed. Thanks. Mr. Halpert went to an exhibit of puppets at the N. Y. Public Library on 23rd St. rounded up by Miss Alexandria Sanford (see page 464 of "The Puppet Theatre in America," McPharlin). She is just getting back into puppetry after time out. He also reports that two of the scenic painters at the N. B. C. shop in New York have had interesting careers in puppetry — one while confined in an Italian Concentration Camp during the war, and the other with the WPA White Plains Puppet Theatre.

NEA Journal announces a 12 min. sound, b & w or color film titled "How to Make a Puppet" produced by Bailey

Films, Inc. 6509 De-Longpre Ave., Hollywood 28, Calif. Suitable for grades 4-12, and adults. Dick Myers is back on special assignment shooting slum pictures for Olympus Films of Cincinnati. Elaine Vavrinek Woodall is with her daughter and husband, who is stationed at the air force base in Newfoundland — which explains why her puppetry has lagged.

The late Lem William's brother, John, has taken an interest in puppetry, and has three hand puppets doing TV commercials now. John Shirley did the animation for him. John Williams, a former dancer, is the producer of the AQUA FOLLIES, which plays Minneapolis and Seattle each summer. John Shirley, who is no slouch with a tool, has developed a new design for better arm and leg joints. An experimental strip tease dancer in the new mode is a real masterpiece of jointing, he says. After finishing a unit for International Harvester Company, John began 16 weeks of outdoor shows in Minnesota and the Dakotas on May 24th. Paul Entriakin appeared in the Baton Rouge Little Theatre production of "For Love or Money" as Mr. Tremaine, and will do the masks for the Children's Theatre production of "Wizard of Oz." Audre Wiksell has also abandoned puppets for a part in the "big" theatre — the role of Rebecca in the L. S. U. production of "Our Town."

The Gilmores (Spence and Alan) got back to Denver in time to plant a garden and work on puppets for a new show. They also let us in on the secret of "How the Dragon Got a Dime." Dragons, it seems, can get almost anything these days. Frinstance, Oliver J., the Distinguished Dragon of Kuklapolitan fame, fortune and frolic, got to be honorary batboy for the Boston Red Sox, when Mgr. Lou Boudreau presented him with an autographed baseball and bat. The Dallas Morning Times, which reported the honor, got off base by calling Burr Tillstrom,

"The man who pulls the strings for the Sunday puppet show." John Zweers, director of puppetry at the Scattergood Y.M.C.A. in Pasadena, has started a Puppet Club News bulletin for the young members. Pvt. Alan G. Cook, now stationed at the U. S. Army Hospital, Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, has not yet discovered how to introduce puppets into the Army routine, but we expect to hear of it shortly.

Ginger Brearton has a lively hand puppet show going in the Connecticut area, and recently did four shows at Hartford's Wadsworth Atheneum, as well as trouping to other towns. Her M. C. is Tinker, and her repertory includes such children's delights as "Pokey's Double Life" (Pokey is a Caterpillar who turns into a butterfly). "Lion and the Mouse," "African Safari," and "Invitation to a Masquerade." Tim Letchworth, Hampton Virginia High School senior, has one ambition . . . to be a professional puppeteer. And it looks as if he has a head start with 30 marionettes, a stage 18 feet long, 7½ feet high and 5 feet deep. Tim has presented his show at the Newport News Public Library and in the 19 Tri-Cities Public Schools — and given the P of A a good plug in his feature story in the Daily Press. Jim Menke acted the role of Inspector Flanning in the Loyola University Theatre production of "Thunder Rock," and performed with marionettes in the annual Variety show. One of his favorite numbers is a slinky, leopard-clad character. Miss Safista Katt, who sings Eartha Kitt records. The Junior Newsletter, which he co-edits with Kathy Piper, came out with a revised format, and a column by Mary O'Nette, in which the puppets seem to have gotten control of their humans. Tom and Wanda Shank of Indianapolis are planning a TV venture with another puppeteer couple. James Gamble, Oakridge, Oregon, decided on puppetry as a family hobby and discovered the many avenues of distraction along

the way to the show.

Marian Derby's Party Puppets have been turning out a good average of shows every month. Punch and Judy is the most popular, but we were intrigued with a program for the younger children called "The Teeny Weeny Show." The audience is provided with rhythm instruments so they can assist Weeny, the clown, in presenting a band concert. Mrs. Derby recommends a rubber base paint, such as Super Kem Tone, tinted with water colors for a quick drying, flat base for painting heads and bodies. She reports that Betty and Ray Mount, hand puppeteers, have just moved to San Francisco, and Ray has an ingenious version of Sinbad. It is presented on an open proscenium stage with a ship as the setting. An anchor hangs down the front, and a sea serpent and mermaid appear from folds of drapery which represents the water. His wife, Betty, who directs him, is experimenting with finger puppets. The Grapevine hints that Mrs. Dorothy Manes, Director of Children's Fairyland c/o Oakland Recreation Dept., Oakland, Calif. is looking around for puppeteers. Don Mathieson's Miniature Opera Company was featured in a picture story in a Coast paper - repertoire of 20 operas helped put him through college. The elaborate figures and scenery of paper and paint are authentic in every detail. Puppeteers Paul Jameson and Emma Vigil, Mt. Diablo high school speech students of Mrs. Eloise Honnet's elocution class have been presenting shows in the Concord, Calif. schools. One of the most unusual puppet acts we've ever heard of, belongs to Cy Grant, London puppeteer. His glib tongued puppet, C. Sharp Minor, is fashioned on his chin, a puppet body hides his head from the nose up. By turning his head upside down he has a puppet with immensely moveable mouth . . . words fail us . . . we refer you to pictures in the April issue of "Hue" magazine.

It defies description. Jackie Calvin, Univ. of Calif. junior, presents a hand puppet show for the recreation department and children's theatre of Palo Alto . . . also shows her audiences how to make potato puppets. Margie and Pat Kelly, those live-wire puppeteers and P of A boosters from Topeka, Kansas were looking forward to a visit from Lewis Parson just before Easter. Margie says beautiful puppet hair is available at \$1.00 a yard from Frances Parker, 149 Bell Ave., Hasbrouck Heights, N. J. — Saran, the shiny, washable stuff like the newest doll wigs, and/or Mohair, which is softer and less fuzzy than crepe hair.

The Seattle Puppet Club is planning its Fifth Annual Festival June 19th at Cornish School with Don and Doris George's "Marionette Review." The Seattle Junior League is planning "Cinderella" for next season, directed by Mrs. Josie Robbins, who does a great deal of directing in that area. Mrs. Grover Leshner, of Clinton, Iowa, has expanded her doll collection to include marionettes, which she and her husband are now developing into a full scale show for children. Sent us a big story from the Davenport Democrat and Times with fine picture spread. Mrs. E. E. Fox of Spartanburg S. C. is another doll lady turned puppetess. Her marionettes helped out on the Easter Seal Sale for Crippled Children in their community. Because

of her long experience as a doll maker, her friends all refer to her new project as "Dancing Dodds" "Can't break 'em, quit trying!" writes Mrs. Fox.

Mrs. Kenneth Hayes of Sacramento got so het up about the lack of kind words for puppeteers that she wrote the San Francisco Chronicle Radio and TV Editor Terrence O'Flaherty. "Have you ever considered giving credit to these puppeters who contribute so much and who seldom take bows after their performances are over? Why? Are you afraid or self conscious about giving credit to characters which you know are only wood or cloth, even though they are activated by flesh and blood talent? Vanity, vanity, all is vanity," Mrs. Hayes has a point. And now before we wind up our last column we'd like to thank all of you who have jotted your "I's" and tossed your "Me's" in our direction, and given us something to write about. Do the same for the next guy, huh? So without further ado, adieu.

George

Editors Note: Since the Punch Line Editor for next year is still uncertain, please address all news to *Puppetry Journal*, Ashville, Ohio, and it will be forwarded to proper person.

Please bring clippings, pictures and news items to Festival with you for July—August Journal.

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OPPORTUNITIES IN PUPPETRY

Do not forget to think over the professional possibilities of working with marionettes. The field is still wide open for serious minded artists interested in a career on the road. With very little outlay financially, you and your wife can be one of these fortunate couples who really live their art every day.

Talk with Cedric and Lee Head at the Festival at Dartmouth this June. They will not promise to change your lives over to their pattern, but will give you some meaty ideas of a very practical nature. They will at least change some of your ideas toward the venerable art of puppetry on the American scene: on a stage, before a live audience, (where it should be, and has been for several centuries.)

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